Epacris reclinata

Family:	Ericaceae (subfamily Styphelioideae)
Distribution:	Sandstone areas of the upper Blue Mountains, west of Sydney.
Common Name:	No generally accepted common name
Derivation of Name:	*Epacris*....from Greek, *epi*, upon and *acris*, a summit, referring to the altitude where some species occur *reclinata*....bent downwards, referring to the leaves
Conservation Status:	Not considered to be at risk in the wild.

General Description:

The plant family Ericaceae (heaths and heathers) is widespread in many parts of the globe, particularly Europe and South Africa. It contains a number of widely cultivated plants such as *Erica, Rhododendron* and *Pieris*.

Like most of Australia's members of the Ericaceae, *Epacris* belongs to the subfamily Styphelioideae, which was formerly classified as a separate family, the Epacridaceae. *Epacris* consists of about 40 species of mainly small shrubs. Most are endemic to Australia but a few species can be found in New Zealand and New Caledonia. They occur in a variety of habitats from alpine areas to coastal heaths.

Epacris reclinata
Photo: Brian Walters

Epacris reclinata is usually a small shrub of less than a metre in height with an open, straggling habit of growth. It occurs in moist, protected locations among rocks. The branches are stiff and have small, heart-shaped leaves about 50mm long. The flowers are narrow and tubular, about 15mm long and occur in the leaf axils. They contain nectar and are frequented by honey-eating birds. The colour ranges from pink through to bright red.

Flowering occurs from autumn through to spring.

Like other members of the genus, *E.reclinata* is a very desirable and attractive plant but it is not particularly easy to maintain in cultivation for long periods. It should be given a well drained position in semi shade or full sun and it is also a very attractive plant for a container.

Propagation of *E.impressa* is usually by cuttings of firm current season's growth. The species can be grown from seed but this is not readily available.